29 Aug 1909

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Sunday

My Billy.

You do seem to have got among the oddest crew. I suppose singers are always rather queer. The young woman. whose name I can never be quite sure of. seems to me to be trying to capture Adrian - poor thing. I have had no letter from you today Possibly I may get two to-morrow. I have not heard from your lodgings - nor from ours whether they can have us on the 16th which is rather tiresome. I suppose it will be all right. We went today to lunch with the Raven Hills. They have

very intelligent children - &
the eldest, Sylvia, who is 16,
might possibly turn out to be
a remarkable creature. She is
remarkable looking at any
rate & I think on the whole
could be called beautiful. She
has very big fine eyes & a
good, intelligent, broad forehead.
& a beautiful skin - Her fault
in the way of looks is that she
is too short. But after all she
may grow. She is very likely
going to the Slade in about a
year - in which case I expect
we should see a good deal of
her. She ought to be very attractive.
I had a long & bawdy talk

with Mrs R. H. She is certainly amusing, apart from being bawdy. But even you, pure virgin though you be, would infinitely prefer Mrs R. H & her unblushing animal delight in all the sensations of the flesh to the vague & prurient insinuations & flirtations, etc which abound here among the spinsters of the country-side. They seem to me purely disgusting & horribly pervasive: I had never realised them before — for last year & the year before Dorothy's illness prevented all their usual goings on. Now literally every day they go to a party or to play tennis or have people to play tennis here: & always there is some inquisitive prying into

supposed desires of a sexual nature. It is all quite prudish & they really know nothing about it. For I suspect that if they ever experienced any feelings themselves they would be ashamed of them & try to make out that they were not what they are. What a tirade! But I have had undiluted Lorna & Dorothy as Mrs Bell is in bed with a headache.

I imagine that this is the last letter I shall send to Dresden unless I hear to the contrary tomorrow. I hope Adrian will get his brief all right. The letter that Sophy sent on was posted on the 23rd I think. It must I suppose have been the letter from Walter about the brief.

Yours I.B.

T. PARSONS 3.2.73

2 Sept 1909

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Thursday.

My Billy.

I get time to read your letters & even to enjoy them while Julian is out in his pram. I have not written to you for some days, for I thought it was no use writing later than Sunday to Dresden & no use to write to Fitzroy Sq. till today. Nothing has happened mean-while except that I have got through more than half my time of being nurse-maid for which I am rather thank-ful. I don't know what to do about your lodgings at Studland. The Mrs Richards to whom I wrote has never

answered. I sent her a card two days ago saying I wanted an answer at once - so I may hear today. I suppose something can be arranged - for you at any rate - I don't know what's to be done about Pernel - or what to do about the 10th. I don't believe we could get lodgings at Studland then as they seem so difficult to get even later. Can you suggest any other place nearer here? It takes a good time to get to Studland from here - I will leave this open & add a line after the post has been to tell you if I hear anything.

Your theories of art are very interesting - of course. I dont see how you use colours in writing. But probably you can do it with art. The mere words gold or yellow or gray mean nothing to me unless I can see the exact quality of the colors. But I suppose if you do it well you convey that. But I dont see how you ever can count upon the reader getting just the right impression, as you can in a painting, when it comes to describing the looks of things. Perhaps you dont really describe the looks but only the impression the looks made upon you. In any case your art seems to be progressing & ascending, while mine is under the heel of mod. cons. It will spring up I hope at Studland. I

cant for the life of me tell you what I meant about Holmes. & I rather suspect I was wrong & that you just hit the mark. I should have abused his sentimentality. Perhaps it was more Americans than Holmes that I disagreed about. I suppose father liked his sentimentality. How odd that he should have had me & Adrian for children. I often feel singularly boorish & crude. But here I feel subtle & clever & almost a genius. Unluckily the feeling is not so pleasant to me as you might suppose. It is only contrast with Lorna & Dorothy that makes me feel so. & it would be truer to say that I feel like a dolphin stranded high & dry, lashing about to find some water.

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2 Sept 1909

ii

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

when one first comes here. one thinks, well they really arent so bad - there are virtues in vegetables & one has plenty to say oneself. But gradually with no nourishment from without, ones own stream of talk runs dry. & one lapses into silence - & then the awful torrent of common-places on tennis & the weather - oh Lord - how much can be said on the weather! - a subject I have never known you & I to mention to each other - overwhelms one & one can

do nothing but subside into gloom. But I forgot that you once told me I ought not to complain! Still I really have some right to now – for I don't even see Clive much – hardly ever alone – now that I have Julian – so it is unrelieved family – What a mercy it will be to get away.

Yr VB.

A letter from you came by the second post as well as a card from Studland. The woman has no rooms. It is most tiresome. I am enclosing Sylvia's letter about the place to show you what there

seems to be in the way of lodging. Mrs Gibbons is our landlord. Mrs King I wrote to & she had no rooms till October. She told me of Mrs Richards. who now says she has no rooms. We have a spare room. & have asked Lytton to come between the 16th & 30th. Of course if he does not come, as is quite likely, you could have it or anyhow could have it till he came, by which time you might have found another. What I should advise you to do now is to write at once to Mrs Gibbons, explaining that you're my sister & saying what you want, & ask her if she can either let you a room or tell you of one. Of course the best thing would be if you could go to Studland where there is probably an inn. or to Swanage 3 miles off.

where there are certainly inns, & investigate for yourself. If you write to Mrs Gibbons, you had better enclose an addressed envelope for reply & ask her specially to let you know at once - as she kept me waiting ages for an answer. I feel rather guilty for not having tried to get you a room sooner but these people were so dilatory that I didn't know about my own rooms till very late. Anyhow, as I said before, if the worst comes to the worst there is always our spare room.

V.B.

3 Sep 1909

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Friday.

My Billy.

I suppose you are in London again now & letters won't take 3 days to get to you which is rather a mercy. I feel as if I had muddled your Studland lodgings, but really there was nothing else to be done - Let me know what happens - & also about the 10th or 11th when perhaps we could meet somewhere - No doubt I could get you asked here but it would be no fun. The family will all be here

3 Sep 1909

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Friday.

My Billy.

I suppose you are in London again now & letters won't take 3 days to get to you which is rather a mercy. I feel as if I had muddled your Studland lodgings, but really there was nothing else to be done - Let me know what happens - & also about the 10th or 11th when perhaps we could meet somewhere. No doubt I could get you asked here but it would be no fun. The family will all be here

then. Mr Bale comes back on Sunday - & it would be too intolerable.

I have I think made Olive very angry. but really she is a fool. She wrote to me not long ago - an ordinary letter in the course of which she said that she had something she wished to explain which had been on her mind for some time. She felt that you must be puzzled & hurt at H. G.'s not having been to see you all the summer. That the reason was not that he did not still want to marry you & that she could explain what the reason was.

it had nothing to do with you.
She made me rather angry –
as she always implies that
you want him to propose to
you again & are thinking a lot
him – & also that she herself
knows all his secret motives.
Whatever his motives may be,
she can't know them, as she
never sees him, though no
doubt she guesses at them &
thinks herself infallible. Anyhow
she wanted to know whether
she should explain the matter
to you. I wrote & I think
rather snubbed her. I said
that I did not believe you
had given the matter any
consideration, that you were
not in the least hurt at his
not proposing to you again
& that I could not suppose
you selfish enough to want him

to do so I also said that I thought the less the whole matter was discussed the better & that I could not imagine that B. G. would want any third person to explain his conduct to you. In fact I put it rather strongly & at some length, for I really think Olive is a nuisance with her perpetual harpings & explanations. As I told her there might be lots of quite good reasons why he had thought it better not to come to Fitzroy St last summer & anyhow the matter needed no explanation. However today I got a few lines from her, simply saying that she has written to you as she thought she ought to & is sorry if she has blundered. I wonder what she has said to you. I hope you won't give me away by being

Telegraph and Station } Seend.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

too amiable to her. But in any case: I don't mind a coolness between us, for I think she is almost too absurd & hysterical.

This is a dull affair to have written so much about. Have you heard that the North Pole has been discovered? Poor Saxon! I myself believe in Dr Cook though he is treated with some scepticism here. I have no other news of course. Tomorrow we dine with the Raven Hills. & I have asked Maud to send my orange silk for the occasion, so as to try to rival Mrs R. H's emerald green

But I shan't succeed. You might tell Maud that it has arrived safely & thank her for sending it & packing it so well. Lorna & Dorothy went to a dance the night before last. They stayed in bed late yesterday morning in consequence & then rushed off immediately on getting up to play tennis. They got back here just in time for dinner & went to bed at once afterwards. I believe they have spent this morning washing their hair. No doubt these details of the way in which well brought up young women spend their days will interest you. Could you pay Maud the 8d I owe her & I will repay you? Yrs R.S.

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Telegraph and Station

Sep-4.

My Billy.

How would it suit you to meet us at Salisbury next week? We thought we might go there for Friday to Monday if you could do so. It is easy to get at from here & of course from London too. & would also be more or less on the way to Studland if you went straight on there. Also it is a nice place & easier to get rooms at than a small place would be. If you think this plan possible, could you do the Threesome past

Your letter has just come. Clive thinks this is not a very good time of year for Botts. I have not heard from Lytton – so in any case you ought to come to us to start with unless you found something else. Olivier is a fool. I hope you won't answer her. [illegible] is at 115 Gower St. where you could see. Has it you like & give me criticisms. VB

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Telegraph and Station

Sep. 4.

My Billy.

How would it suit you to meet us at Salisbury next week? We thought we might go there for Friday to Monday if you could do so. It is easy to get at from here & of course from London too & would also be more or less on the way to Studland if you went straight on there. Also it is a nice place & easier to get rooms at than a small place would be. If you think this plan possible, could you do the tiresome part

Your letter has just come. Clive thinks this is not a very good time of year [illegible] for Bath. I have not heard from Lytton — so in any case you ought to come to us to start with unless you find something else. Olive is a fool. I hope you won't answer her. [illegible] is at 115 Grove Street where you could see her if you like & give me criticisms. VB

& get us rooms? I think
it would be best to go to a
hotel as we should only be
there a short time - Clive thinks
some of the hotels might be
expensive. Perhaps you could
go down the day before to
the most likely looking hotel
advertised in the ABC - not the
grandest one. & if it suited
take a room for us. Or if you
dont want to go there before
Friday, will you let me know
if the plan suits you & tell me
which hotel you think of. We
havent an ABC here or I

would look it up. Clive wants to come & perhaps Adrian would come? (If he did, you & I would really have more chance of seeing each other alone!) I am looking forward to this & hope you'll be able to manage it. If you can I shall really have less than a week more here, as we shall only come back here for 2 nights before going on to Studland. I had your scrap written just before leaving Dresden this morning & rather hope for a letter from London this afternoon. It is pouring here & very autumnal altogether. The autumn seems to have come upon us quickly, I suppose

because we came away so late. Do you believe in Dr. Cook? I have a touching faith in him, though I see that everyone is beginning to cast doubts upon him now. For some reason I am rather interested in it. perhaps because my present surroundings force me upon any subject for relief, especially as Julian makes painting as [illegible] possible. Is Sophy away now & if so what are you doing for food? Can you suggest anything better than Salisbury, we thought of the New Forest but there is the difficulty of finding lodgment. Do let us meet anyhow. I know the Apes must be maniacal by now – Miss Rennyson does not look attractive.

Yr VB.

[Seend] 5 Sept. 1909

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Sunday.

My Billy.

I had your letter this morning. Is Adrian quite recovered? I hope you won't either of you develop diseases after your wanderings. Be careful. I am afraid you must be in a state of some discomfort with Sophy away – but I hope it won't be for long.

Do you think Marlborough or Pusey would be better than Salisbury? If so let us go to one of them. We went bent upon S. only it occurred to us as a pleasant place & one where we could easily get rooms.

46, Gordon Square.
Bloomsbury.

Anyhow I suppose we shall meet somewhere – Will Adrian come to Studland I wonder? There doesnt seem to be much point in his staying on in London. I dont think you had better go to Swanage. for 3 miles is a good long way. It would be rather difficult to arrange outings if you were so far off. I only suggested it as a place from which to conduct your lodging hunt. I should think you must be able to get at any rate one room at Studland. Have you heard from Pernel yet? We have not from Lytton.

so I should think that at any rate our spare room will be empty at the beginning. We think of asking Saxon to come for a Sunday. I am glad you agree with me about Olive. I too should rather like you to say a few strong words — but probably you are right & it would only lead her on. My strong words seem to have had the effect of silencing her. but then I dont see what motive she can have for keeping friends with me & I suppose she has some, though I dont know what, for keeping up with you — As for Nan Pike, she will now become a prawn — no one ever looked more like one & boiled too

than does Willie Clark. No,
even I can't get up excitement
over their nuptials. I wonder
why they do marry one person
more than any of the others
who happen to be near them.
Mr. Bell has come back.
but Lorna is away for 2 days,
so we have not yet the full
family atmosphere. But you
did once tell me I grumbled
too much at the state of things
here & ought to expect less
from fate. I think with
joy of leaving this on Friday
& then only 2 days more of
it till Christmas at any rate.
I think all the love-making in
the Lys Rouge too much of a good
thing you'll be glad to hear. We
dined last night with the Ravenhills
& had as usual a merry & slightly
vulgar evening — a great relief after
Cleeve House. Yours GB

T. PARSONS 3.2.73